subjects of their choice in Indian universities/institutes under the Indo-US Fullbright Bilateral Scholarship Exchange programme are denied visa or do not get clearance from the concerned authorities for months on end or asked to change their topic of research, while the Indian scholars visiting the U.S. under the same programme get the necessary clearance from the U.S. authorities immediately; and

(b) if so, the details with measures proposed to be taken to correct the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) and (b) Research proposals from foreign scholars are processed in consultation with the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of External Affairs, in accordance with the prescribed guidelines/instructions of the Central Government of visa authorization. There is no discrimination against scholars from any country.

**Reduction of school fees to compensate petro-price hike**

2125. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that developing countries like Indonesia, Malaysia and Ghana have sweetened the politically bitter pill of petro-prices by reducing or waiving school fees for children;

(b) if so, whether Government are considering to follow suit; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (c) The Constitution (86th Amendment) Act 2002 provides for free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years as a fundamental right under Article 21A of the Constitution. School fees for students in secondary and higher secondary classes (IX to XII) are generally quite low in Government and Government aided school, which constitute about 70% of the total number of such schools in the country.